

4.4 Anti-Poverty Strategy

HUD 24 CFR § 91.215(j) requires a “concise summary of the jurisdiction’s goals, programs and policies for reducing the number of poverty-level families and how the jurisdiction’s goals, programs and policies for producing and preserving affordable housing, set forth in the housing component of the Consolidated Plan, will be coordinated with other programs and services for which the jurisdiction is responsible and the extent to which they will reduce (or assist in reducing) the number of poverty-level families, taking into consideration factors over which the jurisdiction has no control.”

As discussed under the Leveraging topic of this section (see section 4.3.3) the City of Seattle and its partners coordinate a diverse range of programs and services funded through multiple sources to help no- and low-income families. As of 2008, our City contributed nearly \$68 million annually to health and human services through its General Fund and the Families and Education Levy.³ Additionally, Seattle voters have approved for 16 consecutive years over \$242 million in local Housing Levy funds to provide affordable housing opportunities for low-income Seattle residents.

Over the years of the City’s federal CDBG/ESG/HOME/HOPWA administration, and in concert with multiple City departments’ efforts with their community partners, a network of services has evolved to:

1. Assist families and individuals to access resources that may help move them to self-sufficiency;
2. Prevent poverty, through assistance to Seattle’s children and through life-long education efforts; and
3. Alleviate poverty by improving family and individual economic opportunities that lead to sustaining a living wage.

The following is not intended as an exhaustive list, but it demonstrates the breadth and diversity of efforts to assist low- and moderate-income people. The information gives the reader a better context of the initiatives, partnerships, programs, and services that surround the Consolidated Plan’s federal funds. While no one program or service can address all needs for those in poverty, the City of Seattle places high value on timely and useful referrals and efforts that concentrate on preventing those at-risk from becoming entrenched in poverty.

³ Human Services Department, *Strategic Investment Plan*, May 6, 2008, page 6.
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4.4.1 Assist low-income families and individuals who are struggling to access resources that may help move them to self-sufficiency

- **PeoplePoint: Bridge to Benefits (formerly Help for Working Families)** offers coordinated referral to a range of services which assist low and moderate income people. One call to PeoplePoint may connect eligible callers to energy and utility assistance, child care and preschool options, health insurance programs, food assistance, Seattle Jobs Initiative and the Earned Income Tax Credit campaign operated by United Way of King County. For more information call (206) 684 – 0355 or visit: <http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/financialassistance/>.
- **Washington 2-1-1 Information Network (Community Information Line)** offers a statewide coordinated referral service for programs that assist in a very diverse range of issues from tenant eviction issues to community based services. For more information call 2-1-1 or the alternate toll free number 1-877-211-WASH (9274), or visit: <http://www.resourcehouse.com/en/wa/cgi-bin/location.asp>.
- **Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens (MOSC)** offers information, resources and referrals for seniors and adults with disabilities and those who care for them to a wide range of programs sponsored through the City, the State and community partners. The MOSC is administered by the Area Agency on Aging. For more information call 206-684-0500 or visit <http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/seniorsdisabled/mosc/>.
- **City of Seattle Healthy Communities Initiative** adopted by the City in March 2006, establishes a policy that directs the City of Seattle's investments and efforts in public health services. The resolution articulates the vision, goals, strategies and policy framework that direct our efforts and investments in public health. Specifically, the City's vision seeks to eliminate health disparities based on race, income, ethnicity, immigrant/refugee status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, health insurance status, neighborhood, or level of education through an array of strategies. For more information and to view the 2006 list of healthcare investments (totaling \$20,394, 859 in City General and Other funds) tied to homeless and other vulnerable pops through the Healthy Communities Initiative, visit: http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/foodhealth/publichealth/HCI_CityFundedPrograms.pdf.
- **Homeless Families, Children, and Youth Support Services** coordinated by the City of Seattle Offices of Housing and Human Services, and the Seattle Housing Authority, assist homeless families, children and youth in moving to safe, stable housing by leveraging additional support and referral to subsidized affordable housing. See Section 3.3.6 – Needs Assessment – Children and Youth for detail on the range of programs serving homeless and vulnerable populations in Seattle.
- **Food Programs** help supplement low-income families' food resources, an increasingly critical need during a time in which food prices have risen 8% from 2007 according to

Bureau of Labor Statistics.⁴ Programs include Senior Nutrition, Child Care Nutrition, Summer Sack Lunch, Emergency Meals and Food Banks. For more information visit: <http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/foodhealth/programs.htm>; <http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/seniorsdisabled/aginginitiatives.htm> (for senior food programs) and; http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/children_families/nutrition/summer_food.htm (for summer sack lunches).

- **Utility Assistance programs** combine federal and local resources to offer eligible households discounted rates for electric, heat and water, as well as limited assistance paying utility bills. Access to these programs can be made by contacting PeoplePoint or by visiting: <http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/financialassistance/utility.htm>.
- **Seattle "Family Centers" and teen parent support programs** are operated by different community agencies which form a network of places where families can go to get connected, grow friendships, and build a sense of community. In 2008, City funding for the centers was almost \$1.4 million. Family Centers are created around the simple idea that when people need help they should be able to get it from people who respect them and understand their culture. The philosophy of family support in Family Centers is built upon [Family Support Principles](#). The primary goal of Family Centers is to promote healthy families and strengthen adults in their roles as parents, nurturers and providers. Family centers increase or improve:
 - Self-determination and resourcefulness
 - Community safety and livability
 - Parent-child relationships
 - Childhood early learning and school success
 - Civic participation

For more information visit:

http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/children_families/support/family_centers.htm.

4.4.2 Prevent poverty through assistance to Seattle's children and through life-long educational efforts

- **Families and Education Levy** is a key component of the City's strategy to support children. Levy programs include:
 - Early learning – \$4 million annually
Includes money for sending 400 4-year-olds to preschool so they'll enter kindergarten ready to learn

^{4 4} Woolsey, Matt. Forbes.com – Real Estate, "America's Increasingly Unaffordable Cities", http://www.forbes.com/realestate/2008/07/18/inflation-unaffordable-cities-forbeslife-cx_mw_0718realestate.html, last visited 8/11/08.

- Student health – \$3.3 million annually
Keeps kids healthy by supporting school-based health centers and providing school nurses
- Out-of-school time – \$3.1 million annually
Offers after-school academic activities for elementary and middle school students to keep them focused on learning and out of trouble
- Family support and family involvement – \$2.6 million annually
Provide support services to families experiencing difficulties so they can better meet their kids' developmental needs
- High-risk middle- and high-school youth – \$1.3 million annually
Take a coordinated case management approach for high-risk middle- and high-school youth to reduce delinquency and help them develop positive goals

The initial levy was passed in 1990 and renewed in 1997 and again in 2004. It provides \$68 million in funds for services throughout the city. The most recent levy renewal incorporated a sharper focus on preparing children to be ready for school, improving academic achievement, reducing disproportionate performance by race, ethnicity, and income, and helping students complete school. Emphasis is placed on serving students and schools that have traditionally underperformed. For more information visit:

<http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/education/edlevy.htm>

- **Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)** provides preschool education that helps children from families whose income is below 110% of the federal poverty line to be prepared for school. Funded through the State of Washington's Department of Early Learning and the City of Seattle, ECAEAP offers free, high-quality, culturally and linguistically appropriate preschool services for eligible three- and four-year-olds and their families. The primary goal is to help participating children develop the skills they need to be ready for school and acquire a passion for lifelong learning. Families have access to information, resources, and training that support them in moving towards their individual and family goals. For more information visit:
http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/children_families/school/preschool.htm
- **City Department of Neighborhood's Office of Education** coordinates with the City Human Services Department - Seattle Youth Employment Project (SYEP) and the Governor's Office of Education Ombudsman to help get children ready for school, succeed academically and graduate from high school. For more information visit:
<http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/education/>
- **Seattle Early Reading First (SERF)** works with early childhood education centers to promote literacy development of preschool children in low-income, high-risk communities. In 2003, Seattle was one of 29 cities nationwide to implement Early Reading First. The federal Department of Education (DOE) grant for 2007 to 2010 is administered by the City's Human Services Department in cooperation with Seattle Public Schools, the Seattle Public Library, and the University of Washington. The program operates in five child care centers throughout Seattle that serve mostly low-income children. For more information contact the HSD SERF Project Manager, ann-margaret.webb@seattle.gov.

- **Project SOAR** promotes the development of healthy children through nurturing home environments, early identification and intervention around developmental issues, high quality child care and out-of-school time activities as part of a collaboration with United Way of King County. The City allocated \$135,000 in 2007 and 2008 to fund SOAR, a merger of the City's Project Lift-Off and United Way's Children's Initiative, to implement and monitor the SOAR action agendas on Early Childhood & School-Readiness and School-Age Children & Youth.
- **Upward Bound** offers educational enhancement and a college preparatory program for low-income high school youth.

4.4.3 Alleviate poverty by improving family and individual economic opportunities that lead to sustaining a living wage

- **Child care Assistance** helps eligible low- and moderate-income working families pay for child care for children aged 1 month to 13 years. Families can choose (based on available capacity) from approximately 145 licensed family child care homes and centers in Seattle, which contract with the City to provide high-quality and affordable child care.
- **Seattle Youth Employment** provides job training, placement and educational enhancement to low-income youth. The program increases the number of youth who receive the support needed to complete high school, stay out of the juvenile justice system, and develop the skills and assets necessary to make a positive transition to adulthood. For more information visit:
<http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/youth/employment.htm>.
- **Annual Youth and Education Job Fair** is the largest youth employment fair in the region. It is sponsored by the Seattle Human Services Department and Seattle Department of Parks & Recreation. In 2008, more than 70 employers and educational institutions hosted information booths covering employment opportunities, postsecondary apprenticeships, trade schools and college options. For more information, visit:
www.seattle.gov/humanservice/youth/.
- **Seattle Jobs Initiative** addresses a critical need of Seattle's low-income individuals by providing job training and support services—including access to housing, child care, transportation and counseling—which together make it possible for people to secure, retain and advance in jobs that pay a living wage. For more information visit:
<http://www.seattlejobsinitiative.com/how/index.html>
- **The Age 55+ Employment Resource Center** helps hundreds of older workers find jobs to support their basic needs each year, and helps local employers find experienced, dedicated and reliable employees. Services are free to both job seekers and employers. For more information visit:
<http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/seniorsdisabled/mosc/employment.htm> .

- **Seattle Conservation Corps (SCC)**, established in 1986, is a unique Parks & Recreation program that gives back in two ways: it trains formerly troubled people for viable, living-wage jobs; and it provides trained workers for needed work in Seattle parks and for other agencies and employers on a contract basis. The SCC provides homeless adults with opportunities to learn and work in a structured program that gives them with job skills and helps them carry out projects that benefit our citizens and our environment. SCC is a year-round employment program with an annual budget of about \$4 million. Seventy-five percent of program costs are covered by doing work for public sector employers, as well as foundation and private grant fundraising. For more information visit: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/scc/> .
- **Race & Social Justice Initiative:** The City of Seattle is becoming increasingly diverse. A primary challenge of this diversity is the ongoing struggle to create a community in which all people are valued, regardless of their background. Mayor Nickels' [Race and Social Justice Initiative](#) seeks to reduce disproportionality in economic opportunity, education, civic engagement, and other areas, and to make City services more relevant to Seattle's diverse populations.
- **City's "Unbanked" Initiative** offers help for low-income individuals without access to basic banking services (an ATM card, checking accounts, savings) to build credit and financial assets. Seattle is working with a coalition of municipal governments across the country called Cities for Financial Empowerment (CFE) and the Seattle/King County Asset Building Collaborative to boost economic opportunity for low and moderate-income people. For more information contact: jerry.degriek@seattle.gov.
- **Office of Economic Development** provides low-interest loans for mid-sized and large mixed-use and commercial projects. For-profit, non-profit, and community developers may be eligible. OED funds projects that achieve significant public benefits including:
 - Creation of jobs;
 - Affordable housing that will support neighborhood businesses while helping to preserve a diverse economic base of residents; and
 - Redevelopment of abandoned or underutilized property that will contribute to the revitalization of the City's business districts.

For more information visit:

http://www.seattle.gov/economicdevelopment/financial_realestate.htm

- **Metro Ticketbook Program** provides subsidized bus tickets for low-income and homeless people who need transportation to services, jobs, and child care. In 2008, the City received \$662,500 from King County to distribute to 66 non-profit, community-based organizations selected through a competitive application process. Priority was given to agencies that serve primarily homeless clients. Organizations purchase tickets at 20% of actual cost and then distribute the tickets to clients. For more information, please contact Arlene Oki at 206-684-0106 or arlene.oki@seattle.gov.

- **Prevailing wage requirements** are monitored by the Department of Executive Administration for all City employees working on its construction projects, as well as for any project receiving federal funding. The CDBG Administration office, housed in the Department of Human Services is charged with oversight federal Davis-Bacon Act and related requirements for all CDBG/ESG/HOME/HOPWA projects. Ensuring that fair wages are provided, in combination with training and apprenticeship programs, are another avenue the City pursues to support low- and moderate-income people other than through direct program costs. For more information visit: <http://www.seattle.gov/contract/prevailwage.htm> for City construction projects, see <http://seattle.gov/housing/development/WageRate.htm> for affordable housing projects let through the Office of Housing, or contact Michael.Look@seattle.gov for CDBG projects.

4.4.4 Coordinate anti-poverty strategy services with affordable housing programs

Excessive rent burdens and low vacancy rates have gravely affected low-income Seattle households. Housing assistance programs identified in this Consolidated Plan help individuals and families stabilize housing and focus their attention on attaining a better standard of living. The City's focus will continue to be on multifamily rental units for households with incomes below 30% of median income. Seattle will increase the programs available to assist households to move from subsidized rental units to become homeowners as the next step on the housing continuum.

- **Office of Housing (OH) Notices of Fund Availability (NOFA)** are the primary method of alerting the public and housing developers when funding is available for the acquisition, rehabilitation, or construction of subsidized affordable housing. Periodic bid processes are used to allocate multifamily rental projects, homebuyer assistance, and supported housing targeted to vulnerable and homeless populations. The requirements of successful award of any of these bid processes includes consistency with the policy and priorities laid out in the Consolidated Plan, adherence to all applicable local, state and federal laws, and project feasibility.

In fact, applicants using the City's online NOFA site are linked directly to the Consolidated Plan from the OH website. Many of the partnerships involved in housing development project link non-profit housing development expertise with social services delivery expertise contributed by experienced community providers.

In addition, the supportive housing for homeless populations NOFA itself is coordinated among six public and private funders (City of Seattle, King County, United Way, Seattle and King County Housing Authorities, and ARCH, A Regional Coalition for Housing) in one application process. For more information on the Housing Levy and Office of Housing NOFA process visit: <http://seattle.gov/housing/development/default.htm>

- **Weatherization and Minor Home Repair programs** assist low-income homeowners, particularly seniors, with home rehabilitation loans and minor repairs in an effort to keep them in their homes. For more information on homebuyer assistance and weatherization programs visit: <http://seattle.gov/housing/HomeWise/default.htm>.
- **Downpayment Assistance and Homebuyer Counseling** both focus on obtaining and keeping low- and moderate-income people in homes. Services are provided primarily through community based partners. For more information visit: <http://seattle.gov/housing/buying/programs.htm>.
- **Predatory Lending education** is offered in light of the recent crisis in foreclosure and the common complaint of unfair practices experienced by low-income households and particularly people of color. For more information visit: <http://www.seattle.gov/housing/predatorylending/default.htm> and see Appendix D on Impediments to Affordable Housing.
- **Preservation of existing affordable housing** is critical to addressing affordable housing needs in Seattle. Many of the strategies described in the Housing Market chapter of the Consolidated Plan specifically relate to preservation. Key preservation strategies include programs that provide funding for projects with expiring regulatory agreements and deferred maintenance needs, and active monitoring of the Office of Housing's portfolio of City-funded affordable housing units to ensure their long-term physical and financial viability. For more information on incentives for preservation of affordable housing visit: <http://www.seattle.gov/housing/incentives/default.htm> .